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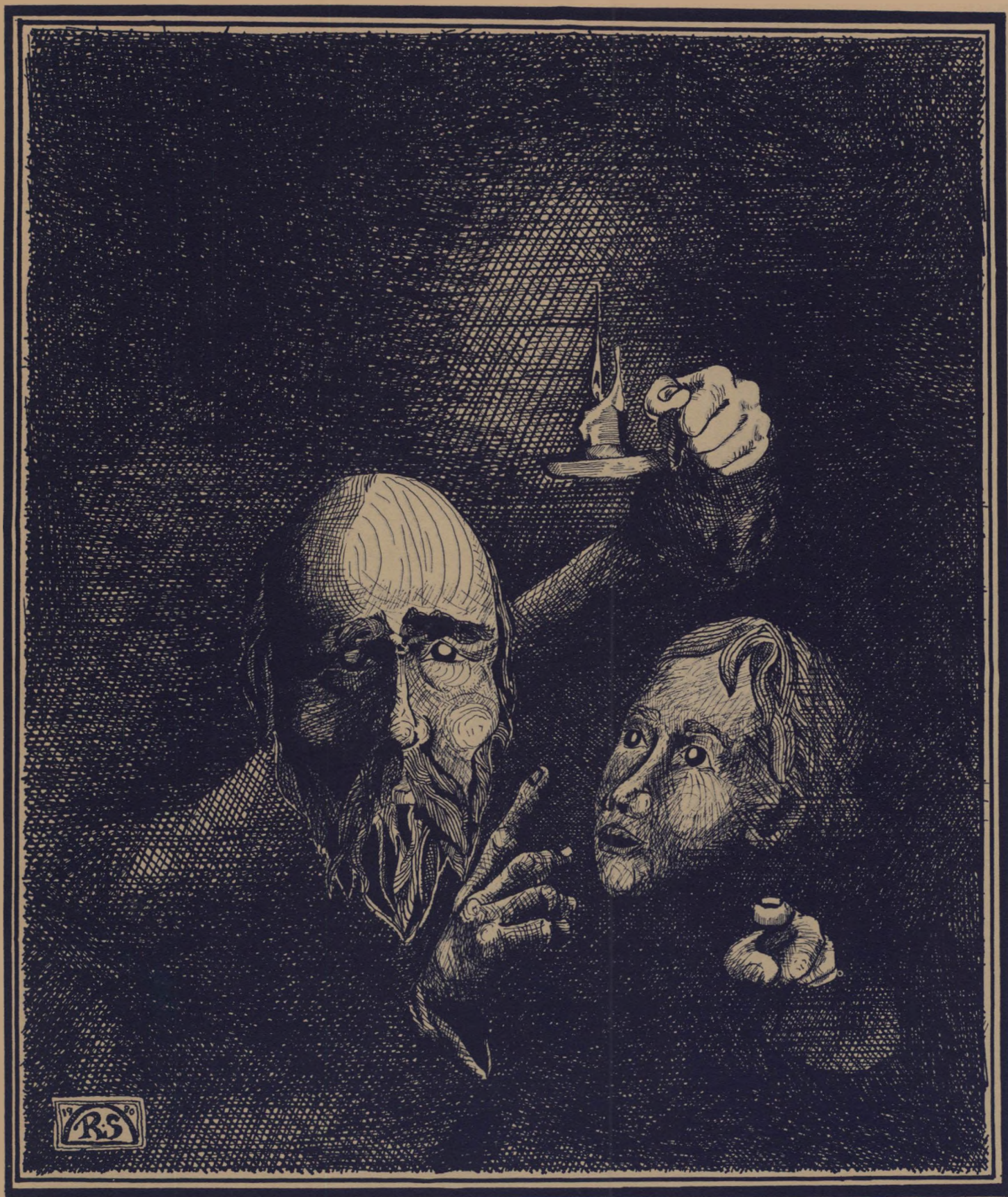
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grimoire

GRIMOIRE

La Salle College Student Arts Publication

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In this tenth year of publication, we take great pleasure in presenting the annual literary-art magazine. Since its origination as a collection of creative energies, Grimoire has become an academic outlet for the outstanding writers and artists on campus. In celebration of its tenth anniversary, we have included a special alumni section to commemorate some of the people who assisted in making Grimoire what it is today. It is our hope that we have achieved what William Wordsworth would describe as "the finer spirit of all knowledge."

May I also add my appreciation to our advisor, Richard Lautz, whose enthusiasm and constant support keep the staff motivated and make me proud to have been a part of this cultural experience.

April, 1980

Lisa Nelson

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Approaching Distances

There is always that constant movement
from one place to another.
The other day, when the birds
were skidding under the cold grey
overhead, I felt it.
It's small wonder
even the trees can stand
the differences that develop,
the leaving of buds,
rings increasing still,
and always the lengthening toward.
I made the connection,
the night I was driving,
striking matches over the map,
that I travel on a line
between two large black dots.

John Di Donato



Arriving at Departure

It's not the easing up out of darkness,
the sprawling sweep onto the shore,
but the wavering caress across sand
before the return.

It's not the freefall of windfalls in autumn,
the easy lodging in solid ground,
but the swing of the branch, a snap of bone,
the swipe at nothing.

For one feels the urgent nudging of the heartbeat toward dawn,
the steady movement at the fingertips,
sees the painful longing for the ebbing of the pulse,
in weary eyes.

One sees the breath released in the coldness of the room,
a gentle fist carried only by its warmth,
feels at this hour the heavy weight of body
against body.

So while the remaining night slips from your reach,
tears from you its deep-rooted sleep,
you see in your mind a ship just docking,
bearing apples.

John Di Donato

Past the Cardboard Valley tama, with love/Xmas

Hiding behind the satchels of persuasion
there are green barrels rolling,
two spheres of an iris origin—
undulating unto the batting of tender blackness.

Seeking past the lids to the sentimental view,
I hand you a lavender corsage for your hair,
to bring the blonde out against the clouds
you call cheeks, spread silently, with accurateness—
they're separate for good purpose, a slender intruder.

Finally, leased behind the presence of a voice,
two peach, lime textured lips cross words with love,
stepping out over the reign of your eyes
into the realm of passionate, revealing discourse.

What a level we've come to, you and I,
a place past the cardboard valley, into the questions
of cream, of silence, of coiling affection . . .

Daniel Walker

The Snow Queens

Over with as quickly as begun,
A sudden, furious flaking off of heaven,
Frozen glimmers whitening the sun,
Then clamped off in a gasp.

Unfair. Uneven.

The heated hills of Rome are barren. Seven
Ladies lie unblanketed, too brown
To clutch the seasoned shroud, too unforgiven
In the eyes that rest beneath the sceptered crown
Of dawn. So there they rest, bare backs pulled down
To kiss the frozen earth beneath their hips,
Bare breasts turned up, obscene without a gown
To cover their exposed and hardened tips.
A frigid blast pursues each halted shred.
The ladies shiver still, arrested, dead.

Neil Silverman



EDGE

**LIBERTY, some farce
mom, dad, together on christmas . .**

Living romances with others as friends,
to have them grow old and recall you;
 you could have been theirs,
a sublime position to take—quite haughty

but it will appear calm in the long run,
in the face of a short rejection
 in the cold years to come.

Living with her would be much harder,
or even acquiescing to her drawing smile,
 bringing you contemptibly close
to her varying presence, her deviating steps,

but it will be severe in the short run,
severe to the touch of a miser,
 hoarding even your most forbidden moods.

Living with that awful tempting sense—
the flux between present idleness, its dryness,
 and the gentle nostalgic love notes
you receive from pardoned friends in your middle age,

but it is still an alien place, a luke-warm home,
living somehow in the face of short rejection
 in the cold years to come . . .

Daniel Walker

The Screw

Who's secure in the working world
Beyond nuts and bolts in hardware stores?
Who shapes the wheel that gears your course?
What operates the Captain?

Why do mice in the working class
Reject human waste and leaking gas?
And when do ships that sail half-mast
Find time to drop their anchors?

Who collects all our working dues
Then unpacks our bags for Santa Cruz?
And what becomes of us who choose
To turn the screw too tightly?

We protect with our working games
Under cellophane and other names.
There's really no one else to blame
When no one can unwind us.

James Palumbo

For Them: Confession of a Frustrated Athlete

I sit in street clothes
like a spectator
and feel no more out of place
than I do at a game—
suited-up—
the players now run
only in my mind.

Tears and sweat both taste of salt;
salt trampled underfoot.
No chance is here for me.
With a shrill it's gone—
and who is to remember?
The cheers and mumbled hopes
are nothing.

I light a cigarette
as an excuse.
My head spins
with the unfamiliar smoke
as it does with unfamiliar victory.
I am destroying
this imaginary athlete.

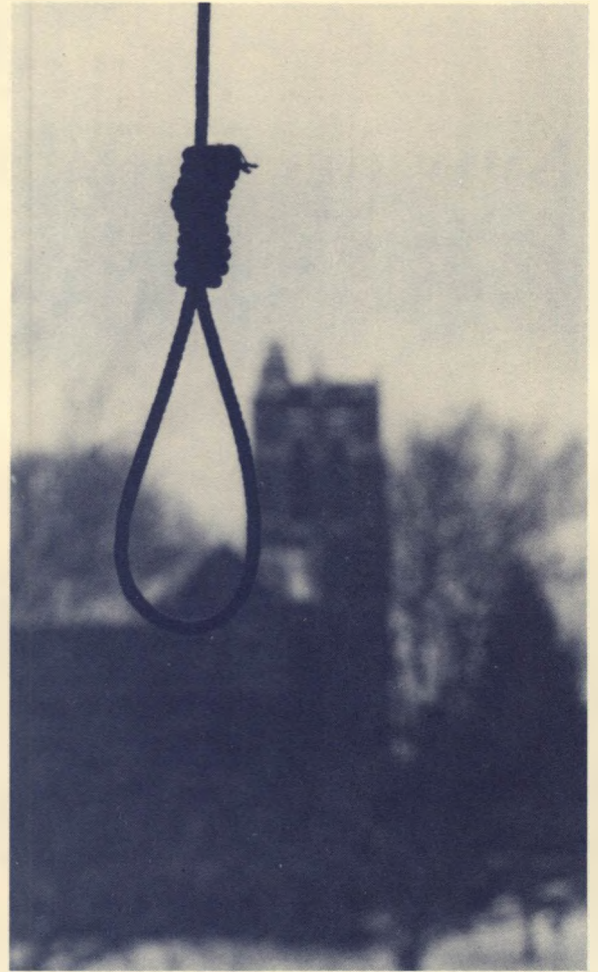
Regina Ruoti

The Point of Breakage

Mended once again,
you are no longer sure
that the pieces have attached themselves
the proper way.
You try to think of strange, beautiful graftings:
a willow tree with jasmine blossoms perhaps,
or a gentle eagle with huge, green cat's eyes,
but can only bring to mind other, less kind unions—
a sad, mute child with a rabbit's face and hands,
the lonely old man with balding head and a turtle's body,
and, finally, that collective primal memory
of a red skinned man
with an animal's hoofs, horns, and pointed tail.

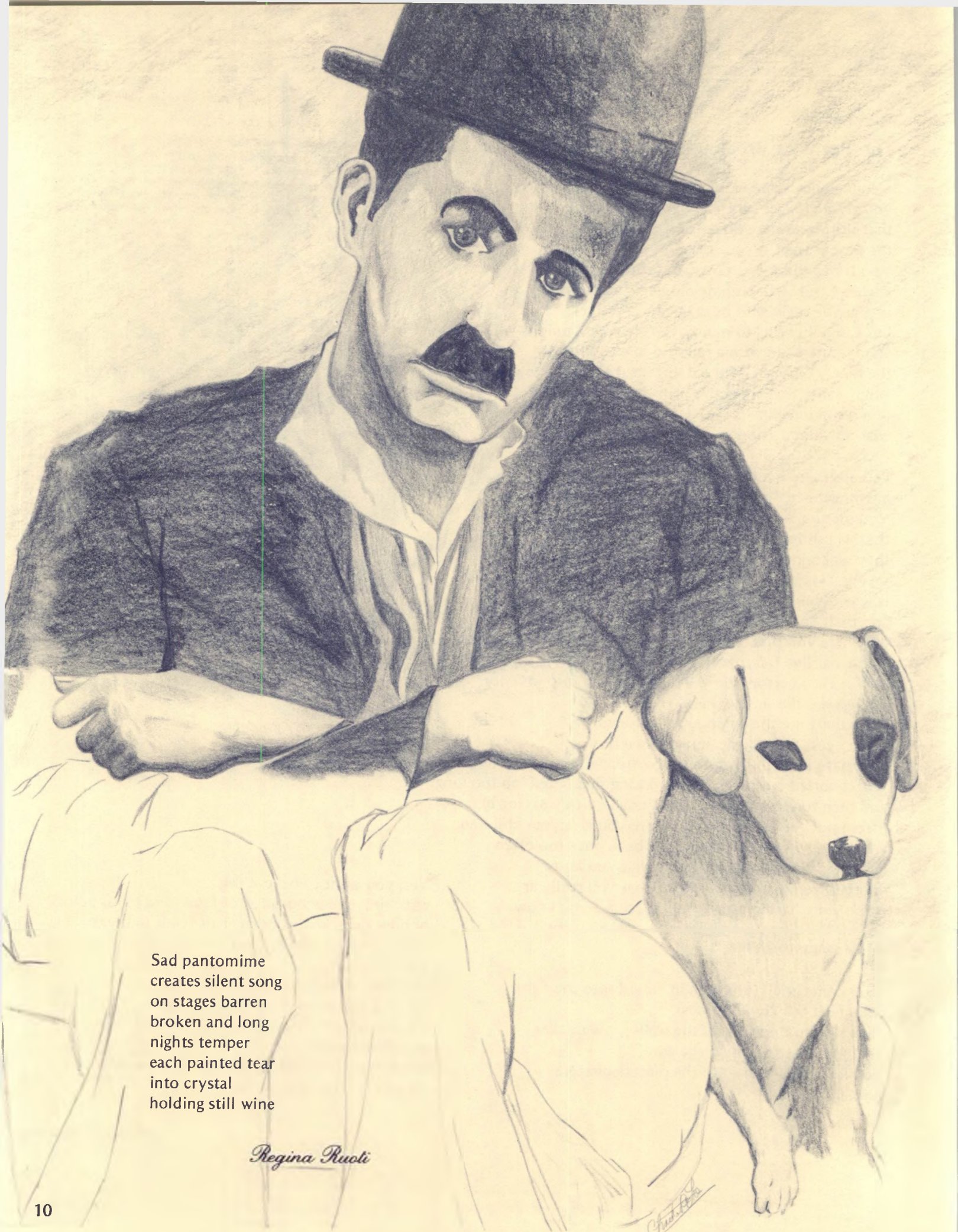
Perhaps there is a thickening, you think,
a stronger place where the pieces have grown together.
You picture a special machine
that will show clearly the points of breakage:
they will take you aside and show you the pictures,
saying, "Here (see the splintering)
is when you first learned of death,
and that, "pointing efficiently with a clean, bright stick,
"is where you first learned of your own impending death.
Those hairline fractures (six here, count them)
are for each person you watched walk off into insanity.
These were the simple ones.
Then there are the compound fractures."
Their eyes grow a little embarrassed now,
they have been through this too often.
". . . assorted crushings from working that hated job too long,
and then too long" eyes averted now, quickly saying quickly-
"from not getting back all the love you give your children,
a rather ugly crack from looking back once too often
(you really ought to stop doing that you know)
another from trying to look at what you really are
(dreadfully hard on the structure, don't you know)
and all the other usual bumps, bangs, and jabs
of living a normal life."

"But come, see" (you lean in closer, into the light,
peering at thickly knit lines).
"See how in these places the walls grow thicker,
yet more plastic around the core."
You lean in further until the picture dissolves
back into you.



Yes, you want to believe this,
but think of earthquakes, of faults and stress points,
of how a cracked wooden chair tends to break
along the lines where it has been glued.
You tell yourself
that the sun reflects most brightly
off of a cut diamond or shattered glass
but can only truly recall images of small, broken pieces
of colored stone
brought up from the bottom of local streams
muddied, reflecting no light.

Marian Rooney



Sad pantomime
creates silent song
on stages barren
broken and long
nights temper
each painted tear
into crystal
holding still wine

Regina Ruoli

Lover

(thoughts of Mortality)

Sometimes
After dark
In those moments before,
With the last few thoughts,
Leftovers in neatly sealed containers,
A serving of why's and a spoonful of who's,
Arriving with sure timing—
The red splotch of a virgin's cycle—
It comes.

It stingily meters our time together,
Each moment sharpened
With the promise of first kisses,
The finality of a last cold clasp.

When it comes, my stomach tightens.
Only will of mind can shut it out,
Chase it back to the bookshelves
To be understood and denied.
But should I look back,
It clasps my hand and grips my heart.
I yield to its stiff pressure,
Take it as my own.
Caress it, strike it, feed it,
Spit at it, kiss it, hate it.

Like an old out of town lover
Hoping to sleep in familiar arms—
Wine, old dreams, hometown news—
It looks for the sure intimacy
Of the trusted friend I am.
And knows I can't refuse.
I am not proud.

It is not proud.
It comes for the Archbishop.
It comes for me.

Slipping between night and dawn,
My unexpected lover
Buttons a shirt,
Picks up his shoes,
And leaves.

Kathleen Sweeney

The Raking

I would climb the cyclone fence,
Jump into the pile of leaves
And never touch earth,
Just cushion on the soft clouds
My father would rake,
Watch him smile and say
Get back to work
Before the wind blows up.

Tangled limbs scrape the sky,
Claw at my memory.
Leaves gather and squirrel
Quick into the shadows
Where my father would stand.
Calling me closer to him.
The raking, the raking,
Cuts the air like my father's laugh.

Tim Walters

To Afternoons at Iron Gates french class companion

To the rattled, once lost behaviour of Joyce,
we depart from the novelty of stringing emotions like shells
on nylon fish lines, to display for the eccentric—
to hide from the clustered yachts of the golden public.

The space to which I assume to ask, best
appears in the installment of the first descending season:
And to that place, I ask a companion in you,
to walk and interlay footprints with smiles
in the wooddrift presence of friendship.

With turbulence at my second window, an aging
rectangular stoop remains my sole means to conjured distances,
to images of your salted brown eyes,
raped amidst the changing pattern of an etched landscape on the pane.

The call then, is not down the narrowness of glass,
but to evenings and afternoons spent at iron gates,
of strangled and numbing streetwalls, of terrifying
surfaces of iceless sweat, of long intending
stares affront, that shovel up the hours to no one's clock.

Hence, to rattle the behaviour of this—both snail
and frightened swimmer, to stand in the power of all steps:
Part your hair down the center of this season between myself,
return the pace I set with one on your own,
reduce the climax of this splash of passion coast

to a symmetrical quarry, returning each tide with a wave,
a wave to each tide to the space I assume to ask . . .

Daniel Walker

Resartus of a Distant Dream **richard**

With all the loss for Tennyson,
we've buried him all the more.
When Armstrong made his frosty step
(upon that solitary hope
amidst the permanent black wave, the crest),
we lost a place that shines-that could not fail.

But now; that single implant
took away from the starworshippers,
(those that prayed the rocket would fail),
that it soiled dreams, fantasies
for a new wonder, grander than this lesson.

With all the Carlyle hidden under thrust,
we've become abusive to the skies' extreme.
And though that stream collected remnants
from that perched sphere in a fable,
(the late night light for the storyteller),
I find comfort in denying science itself,

denying that this beast could even reach her-
the crest of hope riding the eternal dark wave

Daniel Walker

Haiku

The wind blew your scarf.
It waved at me like a hand.
—all that's left of you.

Janice Hill

Stage Light **(for Regina)**

She sits silhouetted in her song,
Outlined in the quiet light of words
Composed to project just a shadow.

Tim Walters

The Wizard

Dashing hopeless happenings
With rainbow hammers.
Chasing foul realities
With flying dogs.
Crushing frightening nightmares
With glowing gem-stones.
Magic learned long ago
By memories of ancestors
Dead long before his coming;
Living beside him now.
What delight! To entertain
Himself with laughing trees,
Jesting waterfalls, and
Purring midnight mists!
Happy with an ingenious
World of possibilities,
When real worlds are too cruel.

Kathy Boyd



**From The Amethyst Shore
(for ned kraft)**

Lady Albatross
lands upon his ledge;
diamond tipped fingers
scratch the ice on his pane.

Behind stained glass windows,
a man of snow stands unmoved.
She sighs and sings songs
trying to melt snow into
pools of heather.

Is he deaf to all sea calls?
Can he not see the sun
reflect her changing hues?
He stands still unmoved
staring.

The lady soars away.
Broken nails upon his ledge
lie glittering, now diamond dust.
He watches with eyes
clouded thick like coal.
Lips sewn with threads of ice
crack coldly and unfold:

"Sorry, sweet lady,
I am the Ice Castle King,
a man without heart,
all life was frozen last spring."



Waves

Sometimes I feel
Like a pebble on the roadside
Small and worthless
But even a pebble
Tossed into a puddle
Makes waves.

Anna Maria Volpacchio



Snapshot: On A Sliding Board

A boy in shorts and socks caught on a slide,
wind-resisted, slanting. Snapshot in mid-air,
still, posed on gloss once he falls forever.
That face is young, forgotten, and unlined

by years. Two yellowed hands impose on sight
always — mother waiting on him to conduct
his play. Her smile uncaptured loses life
squaring colder while the finish collects dust.

Somewhere lost his memory springs to age:
a summer son on smooth bright tin
disappears; no choice remains, again.
Like a stammering film, unfixed, his days
still grow. On playground dirt two people stay
apart — sweatless hands reach and avoid touch.
Printed (in the margin) My son age twelve means as much.
But now my birth and I seem far away.

Joseph Boyce

Mirror Angle

Pretty girl, you reflected chaste images when
you were younger: glowing yellow your damp skin
above birthday candles; holding red-veined roses
between your hands, in front of all, chosen
as May Queen; and found (it seems) walking, confused,
through a funhouse — a placid face, multi-used,
a mirage on slick yellow mirrors; one, two, three,
you turned and stopped, then number four, and free.

Years bury your childhood. The angles captured
now vary, positions assumed to be entered:
Flesh stretched, legs opened, eyes shut, tight.
Any way you turn you are not the one caught
back in the funhouse, fragile and yellow on glass.
See your eyes, bloodshot and broken, pass
side to side to catch the final mirror,
as it quickly comes and draws you nearer.

Joseph Boyce

Love poem to my baby picture

Hey Kodak kid, know what I did
To those chubby stubs
That can't dance or juggle
But only stiffly bend
To recoil

And swish
And shatter mama's china platter:

I didn't mean to do it. I didn't know
That the budding chest and thinning waist
Would fill your dimples and stretch
Each limb to kitchen shelves and doorknobs.

The rounded Buddha belly and
Smooth soft skin were first to leave.
My straight lines seemed so harsh and, believe
Me, I would have taken you back.

But the world always leaves you behind,
Bare on a bear skin rug.
Snapshot kid, I had no choice
But to let your stubby chubs
Become the legs to walk my kid
And the arms to squeeze her stuffed shape.

Thanks, soft friend.
I can see in your baby smile
You've forgiven my new voice
and Forgotten I left you
for a two-wheel bike.
I hope when my kid does what I did
(Leaves her cute fat baby self)
That she'll find her again,
As I have found you
In a clumsy stumble,
Or a broken platter,
Or a chubby child's laugh.

Kathleen Sweeny

THE DAMNED

The grandmother was restless. She scuttled sideways, crablike, between the stove and the white kitchen table. The table hadn't always been white; it was normally a speckled grey. But today the grandmother was baking large round loaves, and the table was covered with a white cloth, white dough, and white flour. She checked the loaves in the oven more often than need be; after all, it was only two days before Christmas. That was why she was restless; it was a good reason. If she had to mislead her granddaughter, Helen, it was best to have a good reason. That was how young people in America thought, wasn't it? Anything is right if only there is a good reason. Back home, children were brought up differently. Good was white and evil was black and sin spotted your soul—when you were a child. It was when you grew up that you learned about grey; grey was what made life interesting. In America, though . . . why, look at Helen. She had been brought up with color television, which was undoubtedly a good thing. But how did the colors fit between black and white? Someone tried to explain it to her once. Light could be broken up into all of the colors of the rainbow, and that was a wonderful thing. But when her grandchildren mixed too many of their paints together, it turned black. Lucifer once carried the light, and in a land where black and white amounted to the same thing, who could be saved?

The grandmother was restless because it was two days before Christmas, and not at all, or only very little, because Esther was coming that afternoon. She frequently glanced at Helen, who was sitting in a corner, basking in the exhaled warmth of the stove. "You know I'd help you, grandmother, but you're so organized. I'd only get in your way. This bread is so good, if I could bake I'd make it myself every week, and not just for Christmas." Helen might have said more, but her mouth was busy with the hard brown crust and the soft white center of the bread.

The grandmother found it increasingly difficult to concentrate. Her thoughts were being drowned in a sea of noise rising from beneath the table, where three little boys were playing. Although Harry and Jackie were not identical twins, and although they rarely stood still long enough for one to see more than a flash of dark hair, brown eyes, and toothless grins (they'd each managed to lose a tooth for Christmas), the grandmother possessed an unerring instinct, which even their mother didn't have. The twins were fighting with Little Samuel, who did not want to be a devil.

"Do I have to be a devil, G'an? Harry and Jackie says I have to be the devil cause account of I have yellow hair. Do devils have yellow hair?"

The grandmother was puzzled. Nobody had ever told her what color hair devils have. "Devils are red all over. They must have red hair."

Little Sam promptly went back under the table to tell his brothers this new fact, adding, "And I'm G'an's angel, so's I can't be a devil." The noise doubled.

"Heard but not seen, isn't that the way they are today? I was brought up to be more considerate of my elders. Why can't they play something more quiet, like marbles? Harry and Jackie, come out from under the table. Mommy has a headache." The grandmother was grateful for the effect "headache" had. The children quieted right away and crawled submissively from under the table. "I know, I know, Mommy doesn't feel well very often, but you must be patient. As soon as it stops snowing, you can take Little Samuel outside with you to play. If you're quiet now, Grandmother will tell you a story."

The grandmother looked at the dough she was kneading with despair. She wiped some dough off her hands with a bit of rag, cut thick slices of bread and butter for the children, poured them some milk, and made them all sit at one end of the table before she began her story. "I tell you a story my own great-grandmother told me, how Satan and Beelzebub come up to earth to try to carry away children. My great-grandmother, she was a good woman. She was such a one as could see the devils waiting for any good person. She'd say prayers to scare them away before going into any room. 'You devils, I spit on your tails,' she'd say. 'You won't get any of me or mine.' "

"Grandmother! How could you put such ideas into their heads? Why, those tales are the very seeds of evil, I always say, and the Reverend Foyer agrees with me." Helen began playing with a cheap necklace she was wearing. "It was such ideas that made my cousin Esther turn out so poorly. If it wasn't that you were so good with the children, I'd move right out, move right out and take them with me. You mustn't tell them tales like you told her."

"Color television," the grandmother muttered. "It was easier to talk to children before there was color television. Their parents won't let you to show them the devil, and their teachers won't let you to tell them about God. It's a black Sunday that first saw children watching the comic strips on color television instead of going to church." She was about to add that who would teach them to out-smart the devil if she didn't, since all anyone cared about anymore was color television, but Helen was by way of having a fit. Her face was red and her blonde hair disheveled. The grandmother could see the dark hair near her scalp.

Esther had entered. The grandmother was fascinated by her swishing dress, flying hair, and glittering sequins. Behind her, a lap dog yipped like Joshua's trumpets. The grandmother found herself embraced by a vision: shining, cloudlike, and powdered. Esther impetuously grasped her grandmother's hands. "Grandma, you're so" The grandmother winced and looked down at her hands. Today was a bad day; one was swollen almost twice normal size. "Oh, grandma, I'm sorry."

The children gazed at their long lost "aunt" in silence. Little Samuel tugged on Harry's sleeve and asked if all hamsters sounded like that. No one answered. Helen stared at her cousin, and when Esther stared back, a white pallor spread across Helen's face. Helen dropped her eyes. "Think I'll have a drink."

"But it's only two o'clock."

"It's eight in the evening in London, Grandmother."

The grandmother was silent. She didn't know what time it was in London. "Could you make me a Scotch and soda, honey?" Esther asked in a licorice voice. Helen growled.

"We were just talking about you, Esther." The grandmother desperately wanted to start a harmless conversation. "Are you going to Rome soon?"

"Saturday. But I might stay in New York a few days to work on the next issue."

"You should be at home in Rome, Esther. You have a certain air." Helen handed her the drink.

"Why, thank you, Helen."

"It's too bad there aren't any more Vestal Virgins." Helen poured herself some whiskey. "But I guess they wouldn't accept you, would they?"

"This is very good Scotch, Helen. I hadn't expected it from you."

The grandmother got up to check her loaves. She asked Esther how the city was, and her job. "And my husband?" Helen added.

"The city is everything the country isn't, Grandma. Crowded, smelly, and incredibly expensive. Frank is seeing one of our photographers."

"Couldn't keep him either, could you?"

Esther smiled. "I never had him."

"That's because he was mine."

"You're divorced, Helen." Little Samuel crawled into Esther's lap and began playing with her sequins. "Frank is never going to come back."

"He was mine until you stole him away from me." Helen licked her empty glass. "Reverend Foyer says they used to stone women like you."

"Little Sam, Little Sam," Esther murmured, combing his curly hair with her fingers. "Where did you get your blonde hair?"

"Harry and Jackie, why don't you take Little Samuel outside?"

"Yes, Little Samuel. Aunt Esther is a wicked woman, so you'd better get away from her. Why, if you're not careful, one of the devils inside me will leap out and chase you until your legs fall off."

The idea of being chased by devils must have been quite disagreeable to Little Samuel, for he ran to the grandmother and stood very quietly while she put his boots and coat on. He walked stiffly to the door, as if to say that no devil could have fun chasing him. As he reached the door, the grandmother called after him. "Put your hat on, and don't go sliding all the way down to the corner." He bowed his head a little as he pulled his hat on, pretending not to look at Esther the entire time. She stared back at him very severely. Little Samuel was then almost pushed into the storm by his brothers, who had scarcely waited to have their coats put on before running towards the door, still tugging at their boots. They had made noises like "Tttht, tttht" as they passed Esther.

A warm silence reigned in the kitchen until the shouts of the three children died away. The warmth increased until it could be smelled. "My loaves!" But before the grandmother could get to the oven, Esther had the door open and was removing the slightly burned loaves. While the grandmother put the last of her unbaked loaves into the oven, Esther brushed flour off her dress. She took a brush from her bag and tried unsuccessfully to restore what the stove's moist heat had stolen from her hair. "I'd imagine the Reverend Foyer has lost most of his hair by now."

Helen leaped to his defense. "He's still got almost a full head of hair on his shoulders. It's a little thinner than it used to be, but it's still as blonde as it was the day . . ." Helen stopped abruptly; Esther glanced at her meaningfully. Helen turned livid and coughed a little. "I think I'll have another drink."

"I'll have a double," Esther said sweetly.

Helen looked as if she wanted to throw the bottle at Esther, but she seemed afraid. She excused herself, hiding as much of her ill-humor as possible, saying that she "was just going to go into the living room to watch the stories on the new color television."

Esther and the grandmother watched the snow filtering down until the theme from "The Guiding Light" could be heard. Esther pulled her chair closer to the grandmother. "Why do you stay here? There's an apartment opening on my floor soon—it hasn't been taken yet. If you moved there, we could take care of each other."

The grandmother had had offers like this before. She always refused. She knew that "we can take care of each other" really meant that she would be taken care of. And though the grandmother was eighty-four, wasn't she capable of caring for herself? She took care of others. "The children. Who will do for them? I stay for the children."

"They have a mother. Let Helen think of somebody else for once. You've earned a rest."

The grandmother didn't want a rest, and didn't think she needed one. "Don't speak against your cousin."

Esther talked until "The Guiding Light" went off with a squawk. She pushed her chair back against the wall and got ready to leave. "I don't want to have to rush in this storm, Grandma."

The grandmother began clearing the table. Helen came back into the kitchen as soon as she heard the door of Esther's coupe slam. "I suppose you think I behaved that way because I've been drinking. Your're wrong. Do you know that I often lie awake, thinking of insults that I'll never be able to use?" The grandmother walked around the table, folding the cloth into the center. She liked having the big table with its speckled grey between her and Helen. "Why didn't you tell me she was coming? We could have gone out. I don't like the children being around her." Helen leaned across the table. Her face was only a few inches from the grandmother's; her breath made the grandmother's nose twitch. "Don't think that I don't know that you were talking about me behind my back when I was out of the room. I always knew that you loved her more than you loved me. You can't even stand being near me. Your face goes all wrinkles!" The grandmother did not say a word; she couldn't. Something had driven the English out of her mouth. It was an effort to understand Helen.

At that moment, Harry and Jackie came bounding into the room, yelping like a pair of jackals. Helen told them to shut up, to act like human children, not to be always running and screaming like a couple of wild things, and to run back and close

that outside door tight. What did they think this house was, anyway, a barn, to let the big heavy door swing open in the cold wind? But they did not seem to hear Helen. She moved towards them with a red face, like a thing possessed. The children screamed. Helen's stockinged foot stepped on a cold, wet spot left by a snow-covered boot. She shrieked. Her hand rose over her head like fury, aimed at the twins. The grandmother lifted her old, thin voice between Helen and the children. They seemed, not spirited, but hysterical, and the third wasn't with them; the third was missing. "Sit, Helen. Don't do anything to these little children without learning yourself what makes them to yell and to scream over all the house like they do. You, little children, come here to old grandmother. Quiet down, so we can your boots take off like good children. Where's Little Samuel? You didn't let him go down the road sliding to the corner, did you?" Harry and Jackie looked at each other, and then started to say something that was all muddled together about snow and fire and squeals that they tried to imitate. They spoke so fast that the sounds of their English just rattled around in her head like marbles, hitting its sides and each other with an incoherent clatter. Before the grandmother could make any sense out of what they were saying, Little Samuel blundered in, covered with snow, his hat missing, and his nose bleeding.

Helen was still standing in the center of the room. Her arm had dropped back to her side. "What could have happened to you? Are you all right, baby? Stop sniveling and tell me! Did you go sledding around the corner? You did? Harry and Jackie! I know he wasn't by himself. A car? Esther? Oh, my God."

The grandmother gathered Little Samuel to herself, removed his wet clothing, wiped his nose, and made him lie down, cuddled in blankets. Harry and Jackie insisted that they were cold and wet too. All three soon lay swaddled in blankets.

Helen expected an investigation that evening. She had the grandmother put the children to bed while she prepared herself. "Now grandmother, I don't want you to say a word tonight. You're in no state . . . I'll explain everything." Helen twirled her beads around her forefinger and swayed the looping end in the space beneath her chin. "I've heard the new one is good looking."

The grandmother lifted her head from her worn black rosary. Her face sagged and her eyes were red and swollen. She returned to her prayers. When the policeman came in, she only looked up to see a flash of blue and gold before focusing on Helen. The grandmother could tell Helen was pleased: the skin at the corners of her eyes grew taut. Although the policeman was short, he was still her granddaughter's type: blonde and stocky. The grandmother bent over her rosary again. She began swaying, and her almost indistinguishable murmurings became markedly cadenced. "Father, horton heaven." She added a special, fervent prayer when she came to "deliver us from evil, and lead us not into temptation." Did demons have yellow hair? She didn't know.

"Is that true, Mrs. ah . . . ?"

The grandmother's head jerked up. Deliver us from devils. She didn't know what she had been asked. She waited.

"Is it true that your granddaughter had been drinking heavily this afternoon?"

The grandmother did not know what to say. She looked at Helen, but Helen was looking at him and twirling her necklace. "Yes, she drank today." The grandmother was confused. She didn't know why he was asking her about Helen's drinking. They had a way of saying in America . . . the demon drink. He asked her something else, about the children. "No, no, the little children don't drink. They're too young, too young. Old grandmother wouldn't let them to drink."

Helen stared at the grandmother, speaking very slowly. "She doesn't understand English anymore. And the shock, well . . ."

The grandmother returned to her murmurings. She no longer understood anything that was said, but she knew what was going on. Helen induced the officer to follow her into the living room. The grandmother felt that she would be seeing him quite often.

The telephone is a wonderful thing for old people, she thought. She would call a priest and have a Mass said for the soul.

Joe Lew

Chapel

Night's choirs sing silent hymns;
Still's fingers caress organ keys.

My

foot—

Steps

ECHO

echo.

Moon's clouds, a hanging incense,
Waft through stained glass silhouettes.

Ahead,

Candles voice a solemn litany;

The sanctuary glows in soft whispers,

Velvet solitude prays vespers

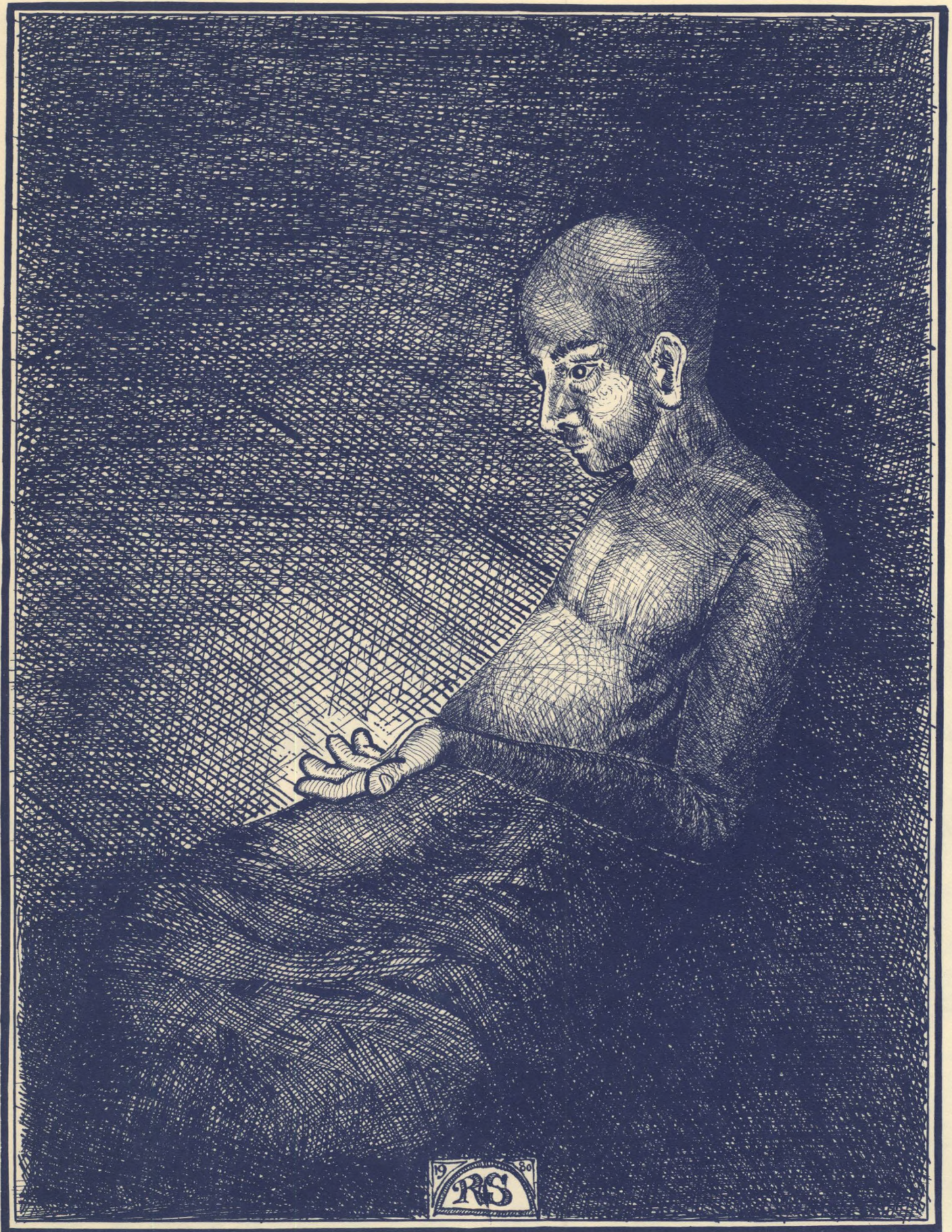
And . . .

I touch You.

Cathy Moser

Imagine me
Sitting before you
Melting unique contour into black vinyl
Looking at you and sinking
Down
Into the softness
Artifice
Through you
Past the first layers
To the foundation
Into you
Reaching the core
Bottoming out and
Smiling.

Neil Silverman



The Prophetess Comes

The prophetess comes,
all brightness are her eyes
from where the conscience stands;
touches your hand
with a drying glance
and enters the fortress waiting there.

The prophetess comes
and unfolds her arms to burden;
drops the past into the present,
pantomimes the echoing voices
with a sudden movement
and moves on.

The prophetess comes,
her silken hair tagging in the breeze;
removes her robe of moonlight;
slips into the starless day
on the whisper that wakened the candle
you were to light.

The prophetess comes,
strong words in canyons of pride and punishment,
grips at sinews that hide under piled fear,
strokes the sweating back beneath the sky
with Cassandra below each shouting sun
I believed to be mine.

Cynthia Weed



Imitation

It was always Barbara
who was Ballerina in the family,
We knew, of course,
By the sound of battered muscles
whimpering their way home
at night
at last
By each screaming scarlet lotus:
"Only new shoes!
Damn all new shoes!"
By the dinnertime, "No, I can't . . ."
Movietime, "I really ought to . . ."
Anytime, "But dancers
must be careful
must be watchers
have to practice."

Mimic Me
(for I was always "Gomp")
watches no more.
Slippers of my own Grimm red variety
breathe lullabies
of quiet pas de chats,
No roars here.

Just practice
Prima practice—
At night,
At last.

Mary O'Brien

Haiku

The velvet spider
Sways on its flimsy trapeze
To crickets' applause.

Cathy Moser



Love

(For Marquerite)

If a word would wake you—
Stir you from this sadness
That seemed to fall on you like sleep,
I would break the silence.

A word like a touch.
A touch like a breeze across a quiet lake
That shakes the dew from sleeping leaves,
That smooths a circle in a teardrop's wake.

Circles as they reach and disappear
Enfold like an embrace
The hidden sadness of the soul,
The joy and sadness of a face.

If a word would wake you
It would be the first word of my lips—
A word as cool as love—
As intimate as friendship.

Tim Walters

Streetlight

Shimmering in the broken glass
The shattered moonlight
Climbs the cracks in the sidewalk—
A ladder up another lonely street.

On a wire a pair of old sneaks
Kick at the dark.
The cold air nips at my face—
Nothing warm about streetlight.

Nothing inviting about the whispers of a closed door
Or the wind gargling in a clogged drain;
But amidst the clack and belch of bars,
The pool talk cued for laughter,

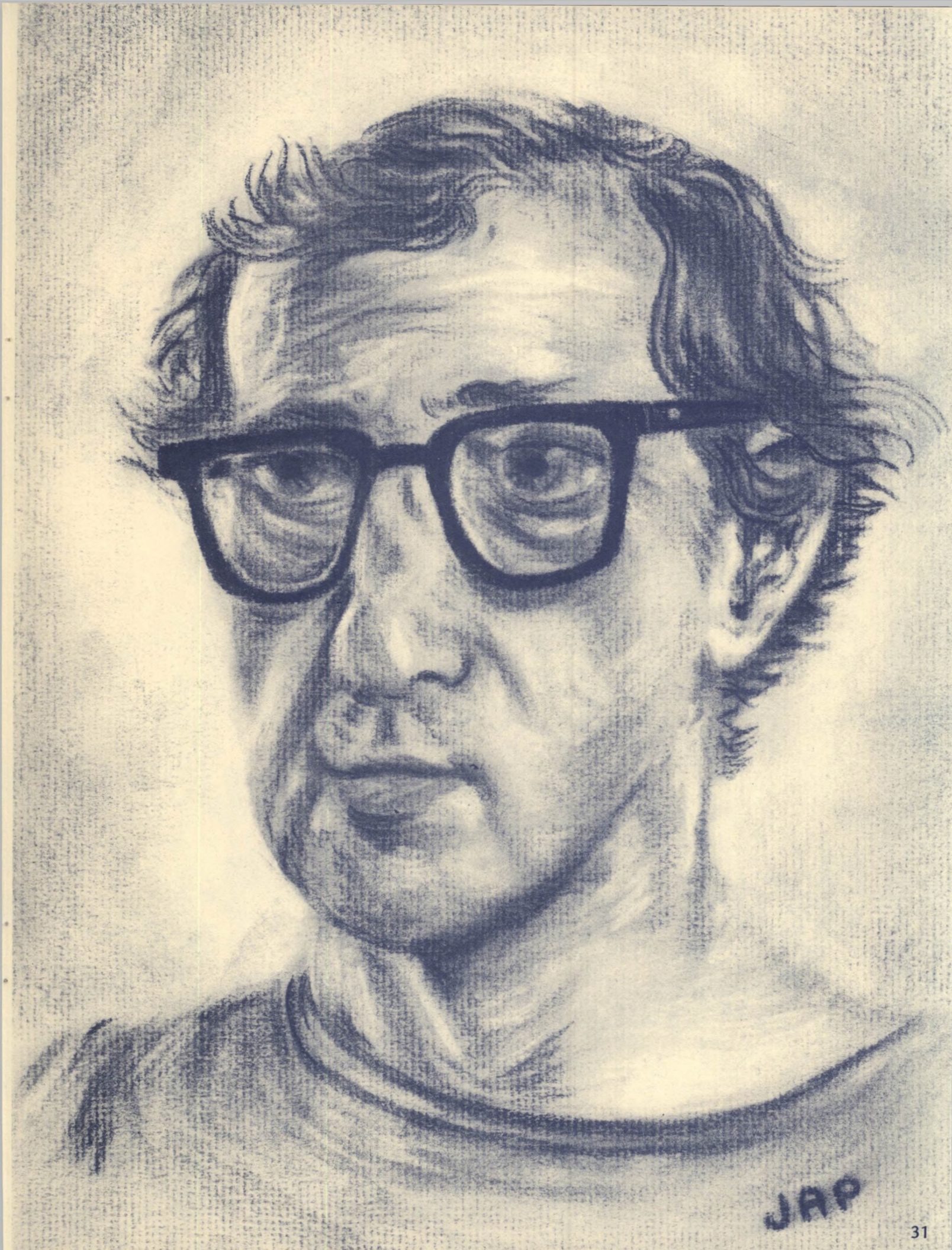
The couples I pass talk softly or softer
Or stare from the shyness of cars,
Huddled in their secret fears—
The arms that now protect them.

Tim Walters

I picture you a modern-day Pauline
Tied to the buzzsaw you scream
Superman swoops in
Great heaves distorting the great initial.
Burns the ropes from your wrists with searing intensity
Lifts you off the conveyor with startling sincerity.
After an aerial tour of the city
He takes you home
Leaving you with twinned stripes of flesh
And a hearty, if distant, handshake.

Meditating in the foyer
Kidnapped by a kindergarten class the following week
Fated to swim forever in a sea of fingerpaint and spittle
You grope for the sides of the crib but
They turn to sawdust
In the steaming humidity of your fist
The plea pours from your throat yet again
This time the airwaves are filled to capacity
Your plight tagged a low priority
And you circle endlessly
In a misguided whirlpool
Becoming so much pabulum.

Neil Silverman





Personal Poem

(For Frank O'Hara)

I strolled into a penny arcade one day
last spring in Middletown, U.S.A.
and (my being of a curious nature)
I put a nickel in one of those peep shows
(the kind where you turn the handle)
and saw you, teasing me to new heights,
and was drawn into the steady
flicker of light. Your life
full of skee ball tickets
(never cashed in), you were saving
up to get one of those cushions
(the kind that make disconcerting
noises when you sit on them)
for some old fart that never
saw the light of Day.
You walked through the night
like Bette Davis in Dark Victory,
a shoulder thrust forward
with every stride, head held high
as the angels come in for one more chorus.
The stars fell reeling from the heavens
the night you lay crushed in the sand
and flickered out. Oh Frank O'Hara,
why didn't you ever have enough
tickets.

John DiDonato

A Love Poem
(after Kings 17: 7-16)

Sift now my body through your fingers,
Gather grain from the winnowing fan.
Subtleties of my loving linger:
The creases on the miller's hand.

Carry the grist to a threshing floor,
Free the kernels that cling to the husk.
A meager yield, yet hold it in store:
Meal to multiply under your touch.

Trust that Elijah feasted on faith,
Coax abundance from a widow's fear.
Combing with care anticipates grace:
A jar of flour that lasts a year.

Janice Hill

A Dialogue Between Cousins
(Luke 1: 13-45)

"Air around me holds itself
tending a whisper of spirits,
the slow shuffle of approaching feet:
this shivering grace of prolepsis."

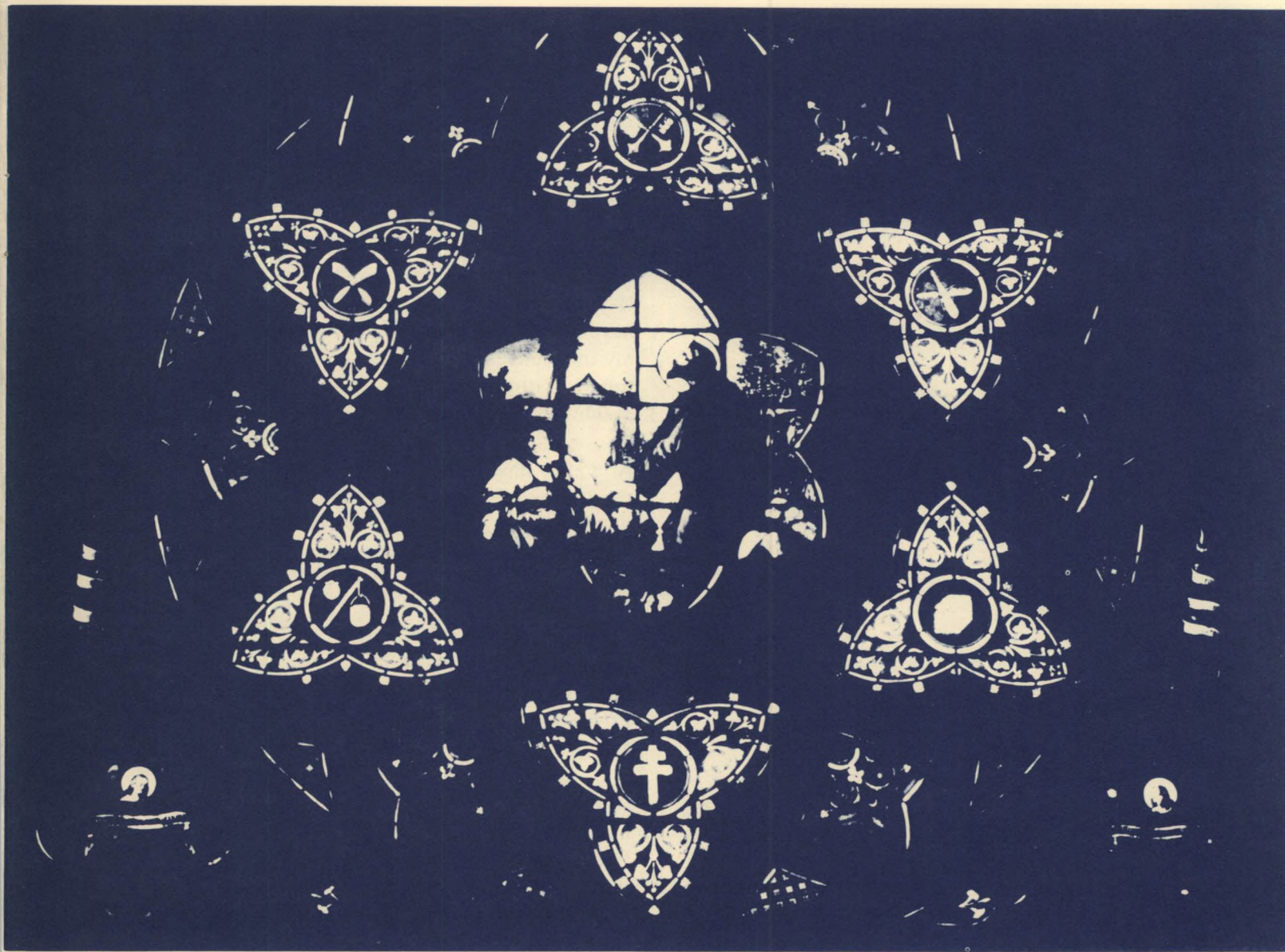
"The ground like stale bread underfoot.
My apron full with wheatcakes and joy.
A fortnight since the angel spoke,
woke me from my watchful sleep.

A journey to my cousin's house.
Hints of astonishment along the way:
wind riffling the sparse hair of earth,
water in the well where Rachel waited."

"My husband mute with wonder.
The folly of the prophecies!
Ladies in waiting: barren, serene,
loving the labor that patience requires.

Who am I, to vie with reason?"
"All will come true in due season."

Janice Hill



ALUMNI POETRY

Freezing

(in a cabin he built himself)

Having reached this less-than-noble pinnacle,
having made my own the nest of eagles,
my innocence has found
the birds don't sing
in winter, they scream.

And after having seen
the snow shelf form beside me,
unexpected presence of potential
ice and glass and snow cascade,
I speak uneasy.

Through the chinks of mud
the cutting wind whistles
old English hunting songs
of venison
and hot blood.

And being of this state of mind,
like vibrating ice
freezing inches thick
until the steam stops,
until the wind breaks

the tops off the trees,
it's not what I expected it to be,
this pastoral dream,
this pioneer spirit.
All I hear is the breath

of some heavy, tired bear
who won't wake up in spring.

Ned Kraft

Winter

There is a long ramp in my dream that I must ascend,
covered with ice. My mother is made of ice
and my sister is cruel — two dark women
telling me lies. I look for my father
and his green eyes, I look for the ocean
where he spends his time, but it is not here,
only this glacial darkness with no color,
only my fear of my mother and sister,
telling me lies.

I have been here before.

My husband has walked me through this tunnel
of fear in an earlier dream, and the lies
and the ice became a vortex of water,
like an amniotic sac full of mistakes,
full of the wrongs I had done him.

Again and again the sac breaks in my dreams —
once I was with a lover, and a hysterical laughter
kept rising and ebbing, but it felt like tears,
it felt like the ice melting, like a cold trauma
passing over my body, like the womb's thickness
or the slush on the streets in winter.

There is a long ramp in my dream
that I must ascend. There is an understood child.
I am chipping away at the ice, but my veins
are full of it, my eyes are full of it,
my orgasms are a cold reluctant bath.
In some peninsular country I dream as relief,
I walk to the edge of the land, I come
to the edge of the water, and there are sun and stars
at once, and all the mundane and exotic flowers,
and there is no one here,
and the snow does not scare me.

Karen Bennett

John 21: 3-9

They had known this defeat before—
The dry ache, the salt-dry throats
The hollow drill of the oars, the boat
Disarmingly light, disturbingly so.

And as before, the voice around them rose:
“Cast on the right side!” and they scurried
Tipping, bumping to and fro. They hurried
To obey the wish of their old instructor.

They were not amazed,
Not this time when the nets strained
With the catch; they only stared
“It is he” and whispered. The fair
One, the one beloved, could not refrain
from smiling,
And sniffed for the charcoal fire through the haze.

Justin Carisio

Serutan

The words make the man
And the language fits
The world. When turned
Inside out a brand name
Is found which accounts
For the clumsy stiff fit.
Veterans of the word wars
Can tell you that this is
Why love has yet to evolve
Why a lover uses a revolver
Why just to live can be evil
Why men are their own nemeses
Why cassocks are fit for a dog.

Dennis Doyle

In Exile

Shroudhappy in the mausoleum of
your marriages, you yeardrifted downward
to an abject stare; now wombroken
loner in the crowded street, stark
terrain of battered flesh,
bagwoman, worldstrewn,
stoned in the geography of your eyes

fuguemad and ungrafted you
closed up shop, an end to owlish
arguments and hatebound brawn; they
said: "crazy lady," "irresponsible";
cleft and naked then, you
souls scanned heroless,
noble in your winespoken soliloquies

lovelost summerful child once, wondrous
in her gonegolden curls, painfree
atop an uncle's horse in Oregon

sleepdrowned, timehaunted,
shadowless, you tempered rages
for your issue's sake; in exile,
half-forgotten these selfstrange days,
you furrow from the ruins
of heredity the unearthed
history of those dreams.

Michael P. Toner

An Old Chinese Poet Speaks To Himself After Dark

Where do my words
fall now
that I am no longer
a poet. I wander
in the darkness
of these great woods.
My hair grows
thin like the lost
lines of my poetry.
My words
no longer make
a sound, they are
lost in an echo
looking for truth.
All of this I watch
in sadness and remember
when the ax
I carry felled
the tallest tree
in these woods,
letting the darkness fly
from within.

Jim McGann

Note to Michael

strange to see the river through the window
that lets the colors in behind me it's real light
as opposed to artificial it's real life
I'm in the middle of, I hope where you are
is just as real (I also hope) and
what we feel between us is a filament that bears
its own energy, glowing in ways too subtle
or too fast for the eye to pick up, a precious alloy
that puts us in the same place "on one level":
the level of the river and the light

Tim Dlugos

The Bath

At dawn, the eye believes
she could be hewn
out of the dunes, a statue
on the sand. But no—
she sheds her robe, stretches
calf and toe: she's as real
as your hand.

Or perhaps she could be
Venus, escaped
from some forgotten Botticelli:
but no - no scallop
covets her. Breasts and buttocks
all undone, she runs
into the tide.

What a bath! The ocean
black as blood, then fired
by the sun: she takes
wave after wave, hair slicked.
Licked to a salty sheen, her skin
likens shell and sea.
She's clean.

Back on the sand, the eye perceives
her, naked. And no - no myth
or mystery: she stands
much like before, against
the dawn, soft
around the edges
like the stones.

M. F. Fox

Wound Power

"her wounds came from the same source as her power"

Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*

I got fucked by a white
who fucked my husband.
Afterward, I spent time
in the mirror wondering
if I should have kept
straightening my hair.
But not wanting to get
burnt again, I hung on
to my natural.

Suzanne Pope Brooks

Combustion
Spontaneous
As plutonium and air
We fuse
Particles
And lose
The formula

(Note: This was inspired by the parentally-abused, mentally
retarded children with whom I have worked . . .)

Circular
Burning
Fire
Purging
But not cleansing
Situation
Insane
Scarring
In hell
Whole
Self
Not knowing
Rage
Accepting
Pain
—mommy did
It.

Susan M. Petry

Overheard In The Sanctum of Industry

Gentlemen,
raise your beers.

Here's to the yeast,
that lively throng

of individuals
who perished in their waste

for this very gold
whose taste we relish.

A toast:
to the millions.

Henry Jankiewicz

Final Exam

Compare and/or contrast
the raving and ranting of Lear,
wandering blindly in and out
of the third act, set at odds
with the storm and the Fool,

with (1) the deep August colors
of the huge Oak that holds
still on the corner of Pine Road
and Susquehanna.

or (2)
with the scattering of rock
and stone just inside
the Pennypack Woods, at the Mower
Road entrance, what is thought
to be all that is left
of the axe factory.

I realize
this assignment appears difficult,
but if you have learned anything
this term, it should have been this.

Louis McKee

during the war

it is absurd, that we make love
over and over while men are desperate, for
there are high winds and the strewn entrails of animals

I am a deserter over and over when I say, here
is your body rising up to me, here is your face
soft as moth wings moving

there have been enough love songs, how can
I look into your eyes when I know babies have been
put into ovens and soldiers have cut off the breasts
of the shoemaker's daughter

they are all nazis, I say like a college
kid, they are all pigs I say like a hippie
but your nipple hardens in my hand and the
grenades, the grenades

Anne Maxwell

Cycles

Bald, with eyes unfocused,
He swallows liquid fruit,
A toothless mouth releasing
Loud, round tears
To bring him change.

Stumbling over playgrounds,
His knees caress the trees
While toy and candy hoarding
Teach him "please" - -
A wish for change.

Mind develops body.
Square root of fifteen years,
Beneath untested hybrids,
Spends much time
On hard-earned change.

Traffic intersection:
One stalls; one passes through
As doctor-lawyer daydreams
Freeze below
Degrees of change.

Simple celebration
Soon rings wet, simple tears
For mommy seeing daddy
Close that door,
Then change the lock.

Into middle-ages,
He watches silver clocks
And overtime, rewinding
Some new Scotch - -
A backward change.

Resting on a park bench,
He weighs his checks and bills,
But cradles one sweet promise:
Bright green trees,
And hopes for change.

Bald, with eyes unfocused,
He swallows through the tubes,
A toothless man releasing . . .
Straight line . . . buzz . . .
And he is changed.



James Palumbo



C. LUCAS P. 6

